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# Organizational Structures for Community Engagement

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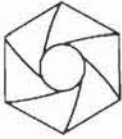
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Organizational Structures for Community Engagement

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### ***Abstract***

In a time of public scrutiny of higher education, there is good reason -- both for the survival of the campus and the survival of the community around it -- for institutions to promote outreach. Yet even within those institutions with formal structures -- mission statements, faculty handbooks, and presidential leadership that support community service -- the practical considerations -- work assignments, evaluation mechanisms and institutional rewards -- present real challenges. Service-enclaves are structures that exist or are developed within institutions that allow faculty and staff to work collectively as they serve their communities. While individual service work is no less important, these enclaves make this work visible, legitimate, and institutionalized. And they are places where traditional academic notions about what constitutes acceptable research and the value of created over applied knowledge are being tested and changed. As colleges and universities seek to connect more to their external environments, they should look to service-enclaves and ensure that they incorporate the following characteristics: leadership, integration with teaching and research, institutional support, flexibility, visibility, and institutional savvy.

## Introduction

That higher education must change is not news. The ways in which it must change reflect the shifting concerns and evolving emphases of the larger society. A society whose most compelling myths have been about the ascendancy of the individual now finds that the hope for solutions to its most urgent problems is in collective action. Higher education is being criticized for its emphasis on private individual gain over collective good (Pew Policy Perspectives, 1994). In a sense, society's struggle with higher education mirrors the American struggle with its own identity.

Beyond that struggle is a public perception that higher education offers few solutions to real world dilemmas. "Increasingly, the campus is being viewed as a place where students get credentialed and faculty get tenured, while the overall work of the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation's most pressing civic, social, economic, and moral problems" (Boyer, 1996, p. 14). The message is unmistakable: things are changing and "no institution will emerge unscathed from its confrontation with an external environment that is substantially altered and in many ways more hostile to colleges and universities" (Pew, 1994, p. 2A).

The relationship between higher education and society has not always been so fractured. Around the mid-nineteenth century, the two existed with a more harmonious understanding of the congruence between public needs and goals and institutional roles. Land-grant universities were established, and the idea that the knowledge produced by institutions of higher education was critical to America's development as it approached the twentieth century took hold. "Public service was not only regarded as legitimate faculty work, but privileged. The public intellectual was very much alive and well" (Rice, 1996, p. 5).

With the rise of the research university, the respective paths of higher education and the public diverged as higher education turned its gaze inward, becoming, as did

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the rest of American society, more professional and specialized, focusing more on the disciplines of study themselves than knowledge grounded in the life of the **real** world. The alliance with the public **was** lost in part due to this increased fragmentation (Rice, 1996).

Even so, faculty public service did not completely disappear with the shift from an external to an internal focus. It has endured and takes place in more peripheral ways, often individual and private and not at the center of the academic agenda. It is a bundle of contradictions. Many faculty not only engage in professional service, but look to it to provide intellectual stimulation and **real work** which is not often supplied by traditional **research**. It is the scholarly product of creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness, but lacks credibility as an intellectual endeavor that is supported and rewarded by academic structures.

Mary Walshok believes that institutions of higher education can integrate the traditional functions of the academy with its societal context, that in the next century "it is likely that the functions [of the university] connected with serving the economic, workplace, and civic knowledge needs of the public will be as central as those connected with research, undergraduate, and graduate, and professional education today" (Walshok, 1995, p. 277).

This is a story about how higher education is making these connections, and, more importantly, how it is doing it through collective efforts. It is told through our experience visiting seven colleges and universities in New England. While these institutions share a commitment to their surrounding communities, they represent variation among institutional types and locales. We believe these seven institutions provide powerful lessons in external engagement.

### **An Organizational Focus**

Higher education is organizationally unique. Its missions, goals, governance, and relationship to other societal institutions are more difficult to map than other organizations. From the outside, especially, it can look very chaotic with a proliferation of institutional types and organizational styles. While individual institutions have unique features and cultures depending on their missions, histories, and goals,

increasingly, they are responding to pressures that emphasize their similarities (Birnbaum, 1988). The liberal arts college and the doctoral granting university must both deal with changing student populations, shrinking resources, and increased public scrutiny. However, these changes typically happen slowly and present dilemmas for leadership. When the academy perceives that it is under attack from the public, it tends to respond with resistance. College and university leaders invested in change find themselves caught in the tension between the public's demands and the values and traditions of the academy. These leaders have come to realize that in order for institutions to change, these external inducements need to be experienced by the people within their institutions as threats to their internal identities: change is necessary in order to hold onto that which makes higher education special (Pew, 1994).

But change in higher education is not always externally induced. It is also stimulated by activities of people who have the freedom to explore and act on their similar interests within the academy (Gamson, Black, Catlin, Hill, Mills, Nichols, & Rogers, 1984). We chose to focus on the organizational aspects of faculty professional service; specifically on how structures within the academy can work in correspondence with external expectations.

In 1994, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education's (NERCHE) Program on Faculty Professional Service and Academic Outreach set out to identify the structures and policies that support faculty professional service in New England colleges and universities. We define faculty professional service as *work based on a faculty member's knowledge and expertise that contributes to the outreach mission of the institution. Faculty doing service act as representatives of the institution, their work contributes to their teaching and scholarship and benefits an entity outside the institution, and the products resulting from this work are not proprietary, but are public, available, and shared.*

Based on information from a questionnaire mailed to every college and university in New England, we selected seven institutions to visit for more detailed study. The institutions were chosen for two reasons. First, respondents indicated that



there was active support for faculty engagement with the community. Second, they are representative of the majority of American colleges and universities: those that enroll both traditional and non-traditional students, have locally based missions, limited resources, and complex and evolving relationships with their external communities. We selected a range of institutional types: metropolitan, liberal arts, comprehensive, professional, doctoral granting, and religious. At each site we asked the chief academic officer to identify 12-15 respondents: faculty, administrators, heads of service learning programs who were involved in faculty professional service on their campuses. We focused on the institution and did not interview members from the external community, nor did we conduct an evaluation of service work either by groups or individuals. Our expectation was that we would discover institutional models that we would disseminate in response to the questions that arise when a campus considers faculty service. This expectation was not realized, because the notion of faculty professional service as an organizational innovation is more rhetoric than reality. What we did find was an enormous amount of faculty engaged in collective service activity. We chose to call these collectives **faculty service-enclaves**.

We discovered that, like most innovations in higher education, those related to faculty professional service occur at the edges of teaching and research. As Bennis (1973) notes, the most successful innovators often have somewhat unorthodox credentials and are marginal to the institution. Most faculty in these service-enclaves came from applied or professional disciplines. These disciplines rely heavily on the external community for their ideas, still exist on the periphery of many institutions, most of which are still driven by a faculty culture that values pure over applied knowledge (Bergquist, 1992). Yet, the work of these enclaves directly connects the scholarly resources of the academy to the needs of the external community. In terms of faculty professional service, when we ask higher education to change, we are asking it first to adjust its lens and focus on what is already there.

### **Service-Enclaves**

Service-enclaves are groups of faculty and staff working on service initiatives in the community. We selected the term, **service-enclaves**, to be both accurate and provocative. It captures the protected conditions necessary for the development of ideas as well as the isolation of a group that exists in indifferent and sometimes hostile environments. These service-enclaves support the outreach activities of the faculty within them but are, for the most part, perceived as parenthetical to the academic enterprise. They can take on a variety of configurations. Some are part of the academic structure -- units such as schools, colleges, or departments that carry out the service mission of the institution. Others are affiliated with academic units, such as partnerships with school systems or municipalities. When we refer to academic units as **enclaves**, we are referring to the status of their service work -- work which remains marginalized on most campuses. Service-enclaves can be free standing, such as centers or institutes and staffed by faculty and professionals. Some are temporary units filling an immediate need, then dissipating, allowing their members to move on to other projects.

While we did not specifically evaluate these groups along measures of success, we did identify six characteristics -- leadership, integration with teaching and research, institutional support, flexibility, visibility, and institutional savvy -- that made them effective at linking the campus to the community and the community to faculty work. We define efficacy on the basis of what these enclaves are doing to move professional service closer to the core of the institution -- **to institutionalize it**. These enclaves are structures in which notions of scholarship are being challenged and redefined, entrepreneurial innovation combines with institutional needs, and service work is made visible to the campus community.

We suggest that these enclaves have the potential to advance the service agenda of their institutions and that institutions housing a variety of enclaves may be most successful at fulfilling their service missions, marshaling the strength of manifold approaches. Sikes, Schlesinger & Seashore (1974) discuss how cooperative groups with shared understandings and goals produce changes in the campus environment by



developing knowledge, taking action, and building links to other areas of the campus. As campuses seek to realign with public needs, we believe that attention should be paid to these structures -- though not to the exclusion of individual service efforts which are equally important. But because these collectives make this work more visible, they are facing the obstacles to service -- such as traditional notions of research, availability of resources -- head on.

### **Profiles: Institutions in Transition**

In our study, we were struck by the role of individual cultures -- some more clearly observable and unified and others a complex interaction of a number of sub-cultures. Within the more heterogeneous institutions, variation occurred among individual units -- a school of education emerged as different along a number of dimensions from a college of arts and sciences. All of these institutions were undergoing transitions, and the role that service played in these transitions varied. In an effort to address the importance of institutional culture, we will provide a brief overview of our seven sites before discussing the six characteristics of service-enclaves manifested in these sites.

**Lesley College** (Massachusetts) was founded as a private women's teacher training college and currently offers undergraduate and graduate professional education to 6500 students. The College was described by participants as service oriented and entrepreneurial, attributed by one respondent to the "practitioner" status of many of the faculty. Service-enclaves abound in this atmosphere and have enjoyed administrative support. Lesley's challenge is to continue to find ways for entrepreneurial, community-oriented faculty to function in mutually satisfying ways with the administration.

**Bentley College** (Massachusetts) is the largest institution in New England specializing in professional business education. This independent college enrolls over 6,000 undergraduate and graduate students, many of whom are first-generation college-goers. Faculty and staff describe the college culture as conservative, committed to ethics and excellence in teaching, prudent, careful, task-oriented, and pragmatic. At Bentley service is best understood through the vehicle of service

learning, which gained acceptance through the efforts of Bentley's entrepreneurial faculty who successfully lobbied for presidential support and resources. Service learning is viewed as congruent with Bentley's mission to prepare graduates to assume "influential roles both within their selected careers and the community" (Catalogue, p. 5). The challenge for those interested in broadening service to include faculty professional service is to combine the practical with the innovative and demonstrate direct outcomes.

The **University of Hartford** (Connecticut) is an independent comprehensive institution serving 7,000 students. The university grew out of a merger of eight institutions, resulting in a mixture of cultures that has led some respondents to lament a lack of "institutional image." In recent years the university has suffered considerably from financial cutbacks and administrative instability. There is also a tension between liberal arts and professional and applied schools and colleges, with the former viewed by some as more traditional and the latter as entrepreneurial and innovative. It is in these applied and professional schools that faculty professional service prospers. Those service-enclaves with strong leadership that is attentive to both the challenges and opportunities presented by fiscal realities of the institution are thriving and have had an institutional impact.

**Providence College** (Rhode Island) was founded to serve Catholic immigrant groups. Currently enrolling 3,600 students, its primary focus is liberal arts undergraduate education, although it offers a small number of graduate degrees. It is an institution that is simultaneously trying to reaffirm its traditional Catholic mission while striving to improve its status as a liberal arts institution.

A five million dollar grant established an academic program in public service and the formation of the Feinstein Institute for Public Service. The grant stipulated the creation of a major in public service and the assumption of financial support over ten years for the initiatives initially funded by the grant. The original excitement that captured faculty and administrators as they created the Institute has been tempered by feelings of being ghettoized within the college, and viewed suspiciously in a culture in which service, as one respondent explained, is understood in the context of the



"Catholic virtue of humility." The challenge is to bridge this tradition with examples of faculty work in the community that adheres to rigorous standards of liberal arts scholarship.

**Salem State College** (Massachusetts) was founded as a Normal School, evolved into a teachers college, and most recently added a variety of liberal arts and professional programs as well as a graduate and continuing education division. This public institution serves about 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, most of whom are first generation and working class. The College has a history of involvement with the surrounding community. The community provides issues for research, while the products of this research benefit local agencies. Like so many of the institutions we studied, Salem State is an institution whose identity is in flux. The older cohort of faculty who were hired to teach in (and were even educated by) the teacher's college are at odds with new faculty with strong research backgrounds from traditional Ph.D. programs. Moreover, Salem is a unionized campus where strains between faculty and administration ebb and flow depending on the contract cycle. Contractually professional service is part of the criteria for promotion and tenure review. However, how this is carried out operates on an individual, rather than institutional basis.

**Trinity College** (Connecticut) serves 1,800 students, many who come from affluent backgrounds. It became co-educational, like many formerly all male colleges, in the late 1960s. Described by respondents as "traditional" and "historically elitist," Trinity has maintained its commitment to providing a high-quality liberal arts undergraduate education.

In recent years, like so many institutions rooted in urban centers, Trinity has felt the encroachment of its immediate environment. Located in the city of Hartford, it finds the realities of an economically depressed urban area at its doorstep. The deterioration of its surroundings has had a detrimental effect on the College's ability to be highly selective. Thus, community involvement and revitalization has become an urgent and central focus of the administration and board of trustees.

For a traditional liberal arts college without a professional focus, integrating service is an especial challenge. Innovative faculty, supported by deans, have made



some gains in getting their applied scholarship accepted as legitimate in an academic environment largely defined by traditional scholarship. A long tradition of good working relationships between faculty and administration combined with the need to join forces in the face of deteriorating surroundings may bridge the traditional liberal arts culture with the practical needs of the external environment. Faculty, themselves, in small enclaves throughout the campus are gradually facilitating this changing focus.

The **University of Massachusetts Boston** was established with a strong community service orientation to address the needs of its surrounding urban area, to teach non-traditional students, and to work in collaboration with other institutions and agencies to develop innovative solutions to urban problems. Serving 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students, the University of Massachusetts Boston is experiencing a tension between focusing on undergraduate education and meeting the expectations of a research university. Older faculty, attracted to the innovative and exciting urban mission, find themselves at odds with young faculty who are concerned with the pressures of scholarship and publication to attain tenure. Moreover, financial cutbacks in the mid 1980s severely damaged the idealism and innovation that drove the original urban mission. Nonetheless, the community outreach mission lives on in individual faculty work and in a variety of service-enclaves, from institutes heavily engaged in local policy issues, to academic units, such as the College for Public and Community Service. These enclaves are at the heart of the struggle to preserve and revitalize the institution's urban mission in the face of fiscal constraints and shifting priorities.

### **Six Characteristics**

While service-enclaves comprise myriad configurations, they do exhibit similar characteristics. We identified six characteristics through which we understand the potential for change: *leadership, integration with teaching and research, institutional support, flexibility, visibility* and *institutional savvy*. While each characteristic was represented in each service-enclave, the degree to which they were present varied.

## Leadership

One of the important characteristics of the enclaves we studied was the role of three different types of leadership, namely, *entrepreneurial*, *advocacy*, and *symbolic*. In Walshok's (1995) study of successful campus outreach programs, she observed that all the programs examined enjoyed the intellectual and political support of campus leadership - from allocating institutional funds and convening community groups to providing internal advocacy. In many cases, these types are carried out by the same individual or individuals. In all cases, there is more than one type of leadership operating.

**Entrepreneurial** leadership is necessary to initiate and carry out a service initiative. These leaders identify a need, develop an idea, and get people on board. The John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts Boston relies heavily on entrepreneurial leadership. Even as the Institute identifies areas for research, it draws on deep understandings of community groups or agencies to approach and ways of working within a highly bureaucratic institutional structure.

It was entrepreneurial faculty at Bentley College who successfully marketed service learning to that institution's president. These entrepreneurial leaders could potentially move faculty service to a more central place on the campus by seizing the opportunity to promote it to a new president, drawing on its relationship to service learning.

**Advocacy** leadership most often occurs at the unit level from a director, dean, or department chair, though this is not exclusively the case. These leaders provide resources to support and encourage those faculty doing professional service and connect the service to the institutional mission and reward system.

At the University of Hartford there is global support for service from the central administration, but where the "rubber hits the road" is with the deans such as the Dean of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (ENHP) who serves as the common thread for many varied programs within the college. Despite his strong support this dean knows that in order for service projects to continue to thrive, there must be shared responsibility among the faculty. To this end, he created the Office of Community



Involvement to link community initiatives and make connections to each of the school's divisions, and a Coordinating Council made up of division chairs and representatives from all involved in service projects.

Colleges and universities are gradually shifting their priorities to acknowledge and reward faculty professional service (O'Meara, 1997). Advocacy leaders can play a significant role in this important change. The dean of the School of Education at Lesley College is making the rewarding of service, which has usually been an informal, privately negotiated arrangement a conversation that occurs more formally at the unit level. Doing so enables him to hold faculty more accountable and makes it part of faculty work in ways similar to teaching and research.

Finally, **symbolic** leadership at the institutional level by a president or provost shapes the institutional culture as one that is supportive of and committed to faculty service and outreach. One institute director argued that symbolic leadership is the most important of the three, saying: "It makes a lot of difference what a president and provost say and do regarding service." Symbolic leadership from the central administration was seen as critical to both broadening the concept of what constitutes scholarship and conveying the seriousness with which the institution regards service.

At the University of Hartford, the president has worked to develop an image of the institution as literally the *university* of Hartford. His commitment to service is shared by the Provost who plans to modify promotion and tenure standards with service explicitly identified as a criterion for promotion. The leadership challenge at Hartford is to address the imposing fiscal realities in a way that is compatible with faculty service.

Trinity College's president has tied his strategic plan for reinvigorating the college to the revitalization of the deteriorating surrounding urban community. He developed a neighborhood revitalization plan designed to transform and renovate fifteen surrounding blocks into an educational and residential community.

James Votruba (1996a) claims that while initiatives by presidents and provosts who have seen the need to better connect the campus with the external constituencies whom they serve are important, they are not sufficient to produce the kind of fundamental realignment that is required to become more than just institutional rhetoric.



Votruba (1996b) argues that colleges and universities must develop leaders at every level who are committed to community partnerships and aligning scholarly agendas to address problems in the public arena.

#### Integration with Teaching and Research

What needs to be made very clear, if institutions are going to free up scarce resources for faculty service, is the **academic value** of the work. Our research produced numerous **examples** of the intrinsic relationship **between** service and scholarship, from guiding research endeavors to **creating** academic programs. A distinguishing characteristic of faculty in enclaves was their **ability** to articulate the relationship between their service activities and their teaching and research. It is the link to teaching and research that ties service to the core activities of the institution. The extent to which these faculty connected service to these activities make them **less** marginal.

Faculty and administrators alike spoke passionately about their professional service activities as the connection between their disciplines and the real world providing, as one respondent put it, "the laboratory, the experiential plane in which faculty can sharpen their skills, gain new knowledge, and develop links to the outside world."

Teaching. Faculty engagement in the community directly feeds the classroom experience, facilitating a level of comprehension that informs teaching. One faculty member reflected:

[Service] has enriched my understanding of topics in sociology that I teach about and has improved the way I can teach students. It allows me to get students to understand civic responsibility, stereotyping, etc. Service has allowed me to see another text, the lived experiences of the people who we're serving.

Another echoed this observation: "You are able to live it as well as study it, and students are able to test out models that you present in class." Once service becomes a part of the course curriculum, its impact is far reaching. One faculty member reported that her teaching has **changed** considerably as she encounters new questions and

problems: "I try to make my assignments more authentic, based on real needs. It's a whole way of thinking that influences teaching."

Research. However, the land grant phenomenon excepted, service has not been recognized as part of the legitimate work of the academy. It has, instead, been an add-on, often the consequence of individual interest and initiative. Long held attitudes about faculty work often make it difficult for faculty and administrators to understand where service might fit. William Bergquist (1992), in his thoughtful discussion of the four cultures of the academy, describes the persistence of the "collegiate" culture that is characterized by an enduring tradition of faculty work -- research as observation rather than application, and teaching as art rather than craft. In this equation, the institutional position of faculty service work is not clearly seen. Bergquist refers to "the collegial culture's dislike of learning by doing rather than by deliberation and observation" (Bergquist, 1992, p. 116). In addition to institutional policies, many of the faculty we interviewed identified as barriers the strongly held opinions of peers and colleagues who hold traditional views of scholarship in an atmosphere where the pressures to publish or perish are strong. Barry Checkoway (1997) takes a behavioral tack regarding changing faculty attitudes toward service, noting that methods for involving faculty must include adequate rewards. But the path to accomplishing this is strewn with obstacles, particularly regarding promotion and tenure.

All this contributes to a somewhat problematic relationship between service and research. While college catalogs claim teaching, research and service as faculty priorities, the reality at promotion and tenure time is something different. In fact, faculty who undertake the applied research associated with service often put their careers at risk (Boyer, 1996).

This dilemma was acutely felt at Trinity and Providence, both liberal arts colleges. A Trinity faculty member observed, "Engaging in service might help in attaining promotion to full professor, but otherwise it would not be considered. Certainly one could not neglect one's research." While faculty at Providence College's Feinstein Institute are writing about pedagogy and the impact of service on students, on



the curriculum and on their own work, this “action research” does not often result in publications in mainstream refereed journals. These faculty conduct community based research in addition to, not as a substitute for, traditional research. At all sites, we heard faculty who wish to do action research stemming from their service activities express concern about how such research would be evaluated in their tenure and promotion decisions.

What is traditionally accepted as scholarship can determine who is most likely to conduct professional service. Most faculty in our sample were tenured, and many respondents reported that junior faculty, more often than not, are advised against engaging in professional service, because it would siphon time away from their traditional research that will become part of their tenure review. One faculty comment sums it up: “Junior faculty members simply can’t do service. They are at risk to the extent that it is time taken away from traditional scholarship.” There were exceptions, and in those cases, the junior faculty members had the support of deans or chairs.

At the institutions that had a teaching focus, it was often the older faculty who emphasized teaching and service while younger faculty, products of traditional Ph.D. programs, emphasized research. Respondents from these institutions also reported that younger faculty are acutely aware that scholarship will decide tenure. A chair acknowledged the shifting priorities:

When junior faculty say to us, “How am I best going to prepare for tenure?” we don’t say to them “Do a really good community needs study;” we say “You’d better make damn sure that you have some published articles in some refereed journals.” It would be wonderful if it was on the basis of your community needs study because that’s what we believe in but as a matter of honesty, we have to tell you that you’re better protected if you’re publishing.

Documentation and Evaluation. One of the primary difficulties in linking scholarship and service is that there are no systematic ways for documenting service activities. Historically, faculty professional service has been individual and private. As a consequence, if service is evaluated and rewarded at all, the methods used for documenting the public record of service have been uneven and unsystematic. One respondent said:



I'm not in favor of just saying that service that anybody does makes them a good professor, but you have to find ways to evaluate high quality professional service -- and that burden has to be on us. We need to figure out how to do those kinds of evaluations. Just like an article may have to be refereed, when somebody does a community study, it can be evaluated by experts across the country in how you do community needs studies. If you can do that and if it comes out as excellent work, then it ought to be part of your portfolio for professional review.

Another respondent noted that "service can invigorate teaching and lead people down new avenues of research," but can be a "diversion," from doing good research: if faculty get too caught up in the "nitty gritty" of the service work and lose sight of the larger, generalizable concepts. Ernest Lynton (1995) places the onus of responsibility for recognizing and rewarding service work on both faculty and the institution. He argues in Making the Case for Professional Service that in order to adequately assess service work, faculty must produce projects that are substantive and sufficiently long-term. For their part, institutions must do a better job of distinguishing between "minor professional outreach activities" and service work that has been conceived of as scholarship (Lynton, 1995, p. 23).

Real Work. Many argued that service activities not only enrich their teaching and research, but also fulfill other scholarly and professional needs that are not met by the traditional academic culture. A number of respondents were concerned that prevailing academic values can obstruct, rather than facilitate, meaningful scholarly work. One respondent explained, "People are suspicious of community service because it is a time eater. But it is the community where my ideas come from." The need to do real work pitted against the power of publish or perish creates high tension for faculty, but for many the payoffs are worth the effort. Another faculty member declared, "My pleasure comes from my professional work . . . solving real hard problems" while another blamed the "publish or perish" mandate for generating a lot of meaningless research. He believes that by integrating service into research and teaching, these areas of faculty work will become more "meaningful." One respondent said that since he has received tenure, he can now "take some time off from publishing and do some real work." These faculty understand that they must go through the

necessary hoops for promotion and tenure, but find that their work in the community -- as scholars and teachers -- is often what truly engages them.

Because service work is often thought of in an individual rather than institutional context, faculty, themselves, sometimes do not see the connections to the institution. "People in our department do some wonderful professional work within the community, but they see it as their professional obligation and contribution," said one department chair at the University of Massachusetts Boston, "rather than something reflecting the institution." A similar notion was expressed by a Providence faculty member, "When an individual does service, it is out of [his or her] own motivation, not out of concern for the college." A Trinity faculty member explained, "Service is an obligation of a citizen [of this country], not an obligation of a member of the Trinity community. Choosing to participate in service is left up to the individual." Lynton argues that faculty professional service is more than an "external obligation" (Lynton, 1995, p. 54). It is an invigorating scholarly endeavor that not only complements, but enriches, teaching and research.

Academic Units. In addressing the issue of service scholarship, academic units, such as schools, colleges, and departments, are essential players. In our study, we found schools and colleges, but no departments that functioned as enclaves. Departments exhibited some, but not all, of the characteristics of enclaves. For example, in a law department, faculty were engaged in pro bono work with the community, and in collaborations with other departments in the institution principally through service learning, but there was no attention to the scholarship of faculty service. In a sociology department, faculty were involved in the community as individuals, but there was no collective departmental initiative or responsibility. Some faculty were rewarded for their service scholarship, but as a department, they felt isolated from the rest of the institution.

The role that enclaves, such as schools, centers, and institutes are playing in terms of scholarship is important, but it is at the department level where change must occur. James Votruba (1996a) highlights the importance of the norming functions of the department in shifting the academic culture. It is in the department that graduate



students and junior faculty learn the values and expectations of the professoriate. As one of our respondents noted, "You can't do anything of any great worth unless it's accepted by the mainstream faculty. If it's always marginalized, then it won't have long term impact." It is at the department level that collective discussion should take place. Lynton, in Making the Case for Professional Service (1995) offers (delineates) "Ten Questions for Departmental Discussion" to facilitate this discussion.

Non-Academic Units. In enclaves, such as institutes or centers that employ staff to carry out much of the service work, it can be difficult to get many faculty involved. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, an institute director is working hard to involve more faculty, noting that most of the activity within institutes is not initiated by faculty. He is concerned that the talent that has been mobilized to deal with problems has not always been faculty talent, citing the tension between the needs of the community agent and the scholar as a problem. The community agent may need an answer to a problem this week, but academics work on a different timetable. On the other hand, the director believes service can reinvigorate faculty and create links between teaching and applied research. For example, he met with a historian to talk about how she can help fulfill a request from a city rethinking its future in the 21st century. The historian was able to broaden the nature of her own academic work through this service initiative. Societal problems frequently require complex solutions, benefiting from a variety of disciplines and approaches. Mary Walshok describes the integrative approach necessary to connect the scholarly work of faculty with the real, messy and complex problems of the real world. The key often lies in the linking ability of faculty and professional staff who are committed to "facilitat[ing] the application and use of knowledge in society" (Walshok, 1995, p. 269).

Looked at slightly differently, the relationship between service work in academic units, such as departments and colleges, and in other outreach units, such as centers or institutes, can be especially effective in bridging the gap between academic and operational knowledge. Walshok found that non-academic staff in outreach programs play a critical role in bringing the academic expertise of the university to bear on community problems. These programs employ competent professional staff with



credibility in a variety of communities to lead programmatic efforts. These staff are usually not conventional faculty, but they do have academic credentials. Their role is bridging and interpreting rather than teaching and research. In addition, non-academic service-enclaves (unlike departments and colleges) provide alternative settings for faculty to carry out research. At the University of Massachusetts Boston, institutes and centers provide avenues for faculty to collaborate with one another. The institutes furnish a means for carrying out and legitimizing applied research that may not be supported by departments.

### Institutional Support

The role that institutional support plays in service is a critical measure of the seriousness with which institutions regard these activities. Enclaves that are supported by their institutions are less encumbered by the constant pursuit of resources that siphon time away from their work on projects. In an era of institutional cutbacks, one could argue that allocating precious resources to these enclaves would be unwise. But, when cutbacks are inspired in part by public demands for accountability, the value of public service becomes clear and compelling. Campuses should be expected to help solve the problems of their surrounding communities. They cannot afford to ignore them. Cisneros predicts, "The long-term futures of both the city and the university in this country are so intertwined that one cannot -- or perhaps will not -- survive without the other" (Cisneros, 1995, p. 2).

For institutions such as Trinity and Hartford, located in one of the country's most impoverished urban areas, the mutuality of faculty professional service and community needs is urgently clear. At other institutions, the necessity may not be so starkly drawn. One faculty member spoke for many at other sites when she described a kind of "laissez-faire" institutional attitude resulting in informal and unsystematic institutional support of professional service. "[The institution] is receptive to [service], but there are no regular stipends or grants." Support is regarded as an add-on to the real business which is teaching and research.

In order for service-enclaves to function, however, a minimum threshold of institutional support is necessary. Support can range from the provision of office space

and student assistants to operational support and rewards. The question of who pays for faculty service reflects the idiosyncratic manifestation of professional service. A department chair at Salem State uses research grant money to support the work of colleagues by buying reduced loads for faculty and providing additional funding for their projects. Service-enclaves, such as the Engineering Applications Center at the University of Hartford, can combine the functions of an academic unit, generating numerous research opportunities for faculty and students, with several other capacities. Through contracts with industry, it creates employment opportunities for faculty and students and generates money to cover the Center's operating costs, support student research, and update equipment. The Center's contacts with industry are helpful to the institution's development efforts and many of the Center's activities overlap with those of other colleges within the university, resulting in collaborations with faculty from other departments and schools. At Lesley College, the Center for Peaceable Schools' continued successes with both its programs and funding efforts resulted in increased presidential commitment, including the allocation of operational support.

In the end, the question of who will pay will be a sticky one, especially for institutions that are strapped for resources. At one site where there is strong symbolic support of service, a faculty member praised the president for "making it easy to do these projects," but added that enclave participants "need to build [the] project so that it can survive without funding." The lack of long-term financial support presents a serious limitation to sustained service. Even among some of the better endowed groups, issues of scarce resources consumed a significant amount of staff time. One dean commented, "We have to scramble now to maintain this," as it is difficult to move beyond grants that are seed money. A director of a center with a national reputation developed over 20 years reported that he continued to fight for institutional money for staff as well as for office space. It may not be realistic or even necessary to shift the entire burden of support of service to institutions, but the current arrangement is out of balance.

Institutions will have to be creative in the ways in which they make their commitment to service conspicuous in order to avoid or minimize resentment from



resource-poor departments and units. At the University of Massachusetts Boston centers or institutes play an important role in faculty service work. Some offer joint appointments for faculty as well as released time. One dean observed, "I can't think of a course load reduction for an external service activity unless undertaken in a center or institute. Relationships between centers and institutes are probably the most important way faculty members get involved in service." Combining the financing of enclaves with other institutional areas is one way. Where enclaves overlap with departmental focuses -- in teaching and research, for example, -- combined resources, as well as information sharing and expertise can be beneficial to all involved.

### Flexibility

Service-enclaves need to be flexible. Community needs can arise suddenly and require creative, innovative, and collaborative responses. Faculty and project leaders are able to break out of bureaucratic structures and policies to respond quickly by mobilizing themselves and others on campus, as was the case in several service units at our sites. A good example of this is the Center for Peaceable Schools at Lesley College which began as a faculty response to requests from public school teachers for assistance with dealing with children's fears about the Gulf War. Two Lesley faculty set up a hot line to help teachers address the immediate issue of the Gulf War and the broader issue of violence in our society. Referring to the Center's evolution, one respondent commented that at Lesley, people often act first and devise a structure later.

The McCormack Institute at the University of Massachusetts Boston has built a network of connections that link institutional resources with community needs. When needs arise, the Institute is able to respond quickly and knows where and how to tap into available expertise.

Certainly some institutional cultures foster flexibility. Respondents at Lesley College talked frequently about the grassroots nature of the school itself, where many respondents described faculty as collaborative and the institution, relatively unencumbered by bureaucracy, as both entrepreneurial and flexible -- capable of, as one respondent put it, "quick turn-around to take new projects." A question that arises

for which we don't have an answer is: how do we allow enclaves to retain their flexibility while becoming more institutionalized?

### Visibility

For innovations to gain a foothold, it is important to cultivate many ties to other areas of the institution (Gamson, 1984). Service-enclaves must be deliberate about reaching out to their institutional community. The fragmenting effects of cutbacks are felt throughout virtually every college and university today. This can be felt acutely by faculty service-enclaves, chiefly because they do not enjoy the same credibility and sense of permanence as other academic programs. As a consequence, they often receive harsher scrutiny from campus members, making intentional efforts at internal visibility all the more important. Many of the service groups generate newsletters and other publications that reach an in-house audience. But, as more than one respondent observed, there is sometimes a cultural prohibition against advertising one's service work. Others noted that, in some cases, in-house publications often get overlooked. To achieve positive visibility on campus often requires a more diversified and sometimes informal approach. This includes developing cross disciplinary collaborations and demonstrating success at bringing in revenue. For example, through its work with area businesses, often leading to patents and profit-making licenses, the University of Hartford's Engineering Applications Center generates good publicity and income for the engineering school and university.

Other service groups find ways to offer direct service to their host institutions. Each spring, the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley offers a program in which eight Bentley faculty receive training on how to incorporate ethics material into their courses. In addition, the Center offers the campus annual conferences and workshops provides speakers to Bentley classes. Representatives from the Feinstein Institute at Providence College have attended department meetings to promote the concept of service learning and has supported a service day during which faculty participated in a project in the morning and used the time after lunch for reflection.

At most sites a combination of approaches to gain visibility is necessary. In-house publications and newsletters, actively reaching out to the campus by offering



faculty development seminars and workshops, personal contact, are examples of strategies to make the activities of enclaves known to the institutional community.

### Institutional Savvy

Faculty service-enclaves exist, and in some cases thrive, in each of these sites. The success of service-enclaves depends largely on how skillfully the people in them read their institutional cultures and locate points of convergence between their goals and the goals of the institution. These people are able to determine if a new idea reflects the values of the institutional culture and when pursuing a certain direction is inappropriate (Bennis, 1973).

Time after time we noted instances of faculty knowing when to initiate a project, with whom to collaborate, and what offices and individuals to avoid. Similarly, we spoke with administrators who knew when to intervene or step back to ensure an initiative's success, or when to challenge or rewrite promotion and tenure guidelines. Successful enclaves were attuned to their institutional cultures and knew how to take advantage of their elements.

Bergquist claims that for real change to occur in higher education, it is most effective to take a variety of approaches that address attitudes, process, structural, personal, and political aspects of the institutional culture. "To understand the resistance experienced in any collegiate organization to a new idea or innovative program, one must first determine the way in which this idea or program will be interpreted by those now there -- in light of their past history in the organization and...the organization's dominant culture" (Bergquist, 1992, p. 228). To be truly savvy about one's institution is to have a understanding of the relationship among the other five characteristics of service-enclaves: knowing how to employ entrepreneurial, advocacy, and symbolic **leadership** strategically; consciously attending to the links between **service** and **high quality scholarship**; garnering and creatively deploying **institutional support** and resources; having the **flexibility** to respond to changing situations and opportunities; and conducting effective **missionary** work to other campus members to increase **visibility**.

## **Conclusion**

Institutions of higher education, especially those that are structurally complex, have become increasingly atomized -- teaching, research, student affairs, and academic affairs have come to exist as separate countries. As colleges and universities seek to expand their relationships with the external community, they must also seek to reduce these distinctions (Davidson, 1996).

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1983), in her analysis of business organizations, refers to this phenomenon as "segmentalism," which "makes it harder for the organization to move beyond its existing capacity in order to innovate and improve" (Kanter, 1983, p. 31). In contrast, "integrative systems" are those that penetrate the boundaries within the organization. As colleges and universities think in more complex ways about their relationships to society and to their external communities, they can benefit from a multi-layered, integrated approach -- one that underscores the connections rather than the divisions in their institutions. Service-enclaves are boundary-crossing units and are helping to make these connections. They are places in which faculty find intellectual and collegial support, occasions for alternative modes of scholarship, such as applied research; and opportunities for faculty to broaden the scope of their projects through collaboration, interdisciplinary perspectives, and increased resources.

Service-enclaves make faculty service work visible. They provide protected environments for innovation. They are making important advances in articulating the scholarly nature of service work and alternative models for scholarship. In academic service-enclaves with receptive institutional cultures, they are influencing the faculty reward system.

Service-enclaves represent institutions well. In addition to their potential to generate revenue, they provide important public relations for institutions whose relationships with their external communities grow increasingly complex and delicate. They are avenues for community access to institutional resources. And, these benefits are reciprocal.

We found enclaves that were doing this especially well. Some enclaves have some but not enough of the characteristics to allow them to be effective at



operationalizing the complex notion of faculty community service. These could potentially be more effective at moving their institution's service agenda forward if they pay close attention to developing other of these characteristics.

Based on our findings, we believe that institutions can work toward increased community engagement by supporting existing enclaves, strengthening others based on the six characteristics we have identified, and creating others. We suggest that a variety of enclaves, from traditional academic units to centers and institutes, provide an effective, multi-faceted approach to outreach. In institutions where service is part of the mission in a time when fulfilling that mission is increasingly imperative, service-enclaves play a critical role.

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**New England Resource Center for Higher Education**

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### ***About the New England Resource Center for Higher Education***

**The New England Resource Center for Higher Education (NERCHE)**, founded in 1988, is dedicated to improving colleges and universities as workplaces, communities, and organizations. NERCHE addresses this issue through think tanks, research, consulting, professional development, and publications.